

**Sierra Times vs.
The American Broadcasting Network**
Clearing up the Media coverage of the McGuckin Matter
Report by J.J. Johnson 07.11.01

Now that the McGuckin Saga is slowly moving to the back pages of the newspapers, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) had the guts do to what little to no state-sponsored media has done - covered the land grab aspect of the whole case. It only took them a month. There was something, of course, that raised more than a few eyebrows here at the News Ranch.

ABC News reported that Edgar Steele, an attorney who says JoAnn McGuckin asked him to represent her children's interests, said the case is about acreage, not child welfare. He says McGuckin hired him to try and get 40 acres of land returned to her that was auctioned off for back taxes.

"I think the land grab is the key to the whole thing. I think that's what started it all, not anything with the family," he said in his first comments on the case since the McGuckin children were holed up in the house, keeping law enforcement officials at bay with a pack of dogs." Steele told ABC News.

"...he said in his first comments on the case..."

Now, we could scream, whine and moan. But we think it's just better to clear up the whole thing to candid world on a few things about the McGuckin Case.

TO ABC: Here were the first comments made by Edgar Steele about the McGuckin (other than his original press release): <http://www.sierratimes.com/archive/files/jun/04/arjj060401.htm>

Note to you folks on the Avenue of the Americas - this was over a month before somebody over there woke up.

There were also some who claimed no one ever covered the issue of a possible 'land grab' in the making. Here's an excerpt from that same article:

"...The whereabouts of the children are unknown at this time. Neighbors are concerned as well. Several, who spoke with Sierra Times on condition of anonymity, stated that JoAnn had been very concerned about "the government taking her land". One stated that the 40 + acre parcel around Beaver Lake "would make a prime nature conservancy." All who spoke with Sierra Times said there were never any indications that the children had faced starvation or malnutrition.

Neither the investment firm of Korenngut, Schumel, & Amy, nor attorney J.T. Diehl of Sandpoint who, according to public records, closed the deal for \$50,000 on property estimated worth \$500,000, could be reached for comment...."

And while we're in the mood - about that so-called anti-government, white supremacist rally that was being held for JoAnn back on June 11 in Sandpoint, Idaho...

It took awhile to track down where these reports kept coming from. The negative label was bantered about across the media wires, yet few would give any details or proof that this was anything close to an anti-government or white supremacists rally in any manner. Yet, this is what even ABC claimed.

"...She helped ease authorities' concerns again on June 11, when groups described by officials as white supremacists and anti-government started a rally outside the Sandpoint jail where she was being held. McGuckin asked if she could be allowed to release a statement to them..." - ABC News.

"[G]roups described by officials". Self-respecting media would at least name the sources for such allegations, but then again, this is ABC. It took awhile for us to hammer down the names of those officials. We'll get to those, but let's go over how that rally was really organized, and see if ABC might want to either change their story, or re-check those sources.

The Klamath Rally was actually announced first at [FreeRepublic.com](http://www.freerepublic.com). After confirming with the site's owner, Jim Robinson, Sierra Times.com publicly announced and endorsed the rally as well.

<http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3b2141141f16.htm>

Many involved know of the FreeRepublic.com's policy toward government. From the main page of their web site:

Opinions posted on Free Republic are those of the individual posters and may or may not be the opinion of Free Republic or its operators. Free Republic does not advocate violence or an overthrow of the government.

Here's the FreeRepublic's policy on "white supremacy":

"... While Free Republic is not edited or censored, it does reserve the right to remove any postings that are considered inappropriate. Examples of inappropriate posts are those that are off-subject or contain advertising, pornography, obscene material, racist material, Nazi (or other hate group) material, materials promoting violence, threats or illegal acts, etc..."

On June 10, there was a meeting held at a Pizza Hut restaurant in Sandpoint to discuss planning for the rally. This reporter was in attendance. The truth was, there really was no 'group' organizing the rally. Contact with local law enforcement and even the mayor prior to the rally was confirmed by Don Harkins - Editor and Chief of the print publication, The Idaho Observer. ABC has provided no proof that Don Harkins is a white supremacist. This reporter was invited into his home and office.

The Editor & Chief of Sierra Times.com is Black and his spouse is Jewish. ABC has provided no proof that Sierra Times.com (or anyone in its staff) is a white supremacist. Since there has never been a definition of "anti-government" stated by media outlets who enjoy using the phrase, it is safe to say that no proof has been given that the Free Republic, Sierra Times.com, or the Idaho Observer are "anti-government". While in Sandpoint Idaho, the

only "officials" that would even answer questions to Sierra Times were government employees. Those answers were reported at this web site.

ABC News did state that Steele gained notoriety as the attorney who defended the Aryan Nation in a civil suit that ended up costing the group its Northern Idaho compound. Yet, ABC did not label Steele as a white supremacist. Steele - who was also at the Sandpoint Pizza Hut - spent most of his time outside on the phone, and had virtually nothing to do with "organizing the rally".

This may be a surprise to some, especially to those on the McGuckin defense team who, on June 11th, released a statement to the media distancing JoAnn from the rally that was taking place outside - implying that Edgar Steele was responsible at the rally. Sierra Times can confirm there were protestors outside, but Edgar Steele was not among them.

Nor were the original Free Republic members that first called for the rally.

Steele was in court, and due to the speed of his press release after the June 11 hearing, was obviously at his office later preparing and copying a press release. Steele's presence outside the courthouse was only to distribute his media statement to the press. Again, he was not seen with the protestors, and was never reported by any media outlet to be among the protestors.

Which begs the question: What made this an anti-government, white supremacist rally?

Answer: propaganda. Sierra Times.com has learned from sources who spoke with ABC News contacts that their report that so-called white supremacists staged the June 11 rally came from two 'reliable sources' - Attorney Bryce Powell, and Bonner County Commission Chairman Tom Suttmeier. From what Sierra Times has learned, ABC did not ask anyone to back up those claims.

Hope this clears matter up.

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